NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE

Humanities

OFFICE OF **DIGITAL HUMANITIES**

DIGITAL HUMANITIES START-UP GRANTS

Deadline: September 11, 2014 (for projects beginning May 2015)

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 45.169

Items referred to in this document needed to complete your application:

□ Budget instructions
□ Sample budget
□ Budget form
□ Instructions for data management plan
□ Grants.gov application package and instructions

Also see the **application checklist** at the end of this document.

Questions?

Contact the NEH Office of Digital Humanities via e-mail at odh@neh.gov. Applicants wishing to speak to a staff member by telephone should provide in an e-mail message a telephone number and a preferred time to call. Hearing-impaired applicants can contact NEH via TDD at 1-866-372-2930.

Submission via Grants.gov

All applications to this program must be submitted via Grants.gov. To submit an application via Grants.gov, you must have an active Entity record in the System for Award Management (SAM). Entity records must be updated at least annually. We strongly recommend that you update (or, if necessary, create) your SAM Entity record at least four weeks before the application deadline, and that you complete or verify your Grants.gov registration at least two weeks before the application deadline.

I. Program Description

The Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants program awards relatively small grants to support the planning stages of innovative projects that promise to benefit the humanities.

Proposals should be for the planning or initial stages of digital initiatives in any area of the humanities. Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants may involve

- research that brings new approaches or documents best practices in the study of the digital humanities;

- planning and developing prototypes of new digital tools for preserving, analyzing, and making accessible digital resources, including libraries' and museums' digital assets;

- scholarship that focuses on the history, criticism, and philosophy of digital culture and its impact on society;

- scholarship or studies that examine the philosophical or practical implications and impact of the use of emerging technologies in specific fields or disciplines of the humanities, or in interdisciplinary collaborations involving several fields or disciplines;

- innovative uses of technology for public programming and education incorporating both traditional and new media; and

- new digital modes of publication that facilitate the dissemination of humanities scholarship in advanced academic as well as informal or formal educational settings at all academic levels.

Innovation is a hallmark of this grant category, which incorporates the "high risk/high reward" paradigm often used by funding agencies in the sciences. NEH is requesting proposals for projects that take some risks in the pursuit of innovation and excellence.

Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants should result in plans, prototypes, or proofs of concept for long-term digital humanities projects prior to implementation.

Two levels of awards will be made in this program: Level I and Level II.

Level I awards are small grants designed to fund brainstorming sessions, workshops, early alpha-level prototypes, and initial planning. In addition to early planning towards an innovative prototype, Level I proposals should identify a problem or research question, explore a research agenda, or discover appropriate methodologies or technologies. Outcomes for Level I projects would likely include reports, position papers, and plans for subsequent steps and future research or development. Level I projects may also fund conferences or workshops addressing specific topics related to the impact of technology on the humanities. Proposals should include specific plans for broad dissemination of project outcomes.

Level II awards are larger grants that can be used for more fully-formed projects that are ready to begin implementation or demonstrate proofs of concept. Level II proposals should therefore include a more articulated plan of work leading to concrete and tangible outcomes, such as working prototypes, test beds, or demonstration projects. Applicants must state in their narrative which funding level they seek. Applicants should carefully choose the funding level appropriate to the needs of the proposed project. See Section II, Award Information, for more details.

Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants support full-time or part-time activities for periods up to eighteen months. Support is available for various combinations of scholars, consultants, and research assistants; project-related travel; and technical support and services. Up to 20 percent of the total grant may be used for the acquisition of computing hardware and software. All grantees are expected to communicate the results of their work to appropriate scholarly and public audiences.

Successful applicants will be expected to create a "lessons learned" white paper. This white paper should document the project, including lessons learned, so that others can benefit from the grantees' experience. This white paper will be posted on the NEH website.

All proposals will be required to include a *data management plan* that discusses how research data will be preserved. (Please see the Application and Submission Information section for more details.)

Types of projects not supported

Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants cannot be used for

- projects that mainly involve digitization, unless the applicant is proposing an innovative method for digitization;

- the creation or conversion of a scholarly journal (however, the exploration of or planning for new modes of scholarly publication is allowed);

- recurring or established conferences or professional meetings;

- acquisition of computer equipment or software in excess of 20 percent of the grant total;

- creative or performing arts;

- empirical social scientific research;

- work undertaken in the pursuit of an academic degree;

- the preparation or publication of textbooks;

- projects that seek to promote a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view; or

- projects that advocate a particular program of social action.

Applicants seeking to build or digitize collections, create general-use archives, or develop reference resources like dictionaries and encyclopedias should consider the Humanities Collections and Reference Resources (HCRR) program. Applicants in the planning stages of their projects should especially consider the HCRR *Foundations* subset of this grant category.

Applicants seeking to plan and develop websites, mobile applications, games, and virtual environments that significantly contribute to public engagement with the humanities should consider the Digital Projects for the Public program offered by the NEH Division of Public Programs.

Please contact Office of Digital Humanities program staff if you have any questions.

Providing access to grant products

As a taxpayer-supported federal agency, NEH endeavors to make the products of its grants available to the broadest possible audience. Our goal is for scholars, educators, students, and the American public to have ready and easy access to the wide range of NEH grant products. For the Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants program, such products may include software code, algorithms, digital tools, reports, articles, and websites. For projects that lead to the development of such products, all other considerations being equal, NEH gives preference to those that provide free access to the public.

II. Award Information

Awards are for up to eighteen months.

Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants have two levels of funding:

Level I Grants range from $5,000 to $30,000 in outright funding.

Level II Grants range from $30,001 to $60,000 in outright funding.

In the narrative, applicants must specify which level of funding they seek.

Cost sharing

Cost sharing consists of the cash contributions made to a project by the applicant and third parties, as well as third party in-kind contributions, such as donated services and goods. Cost sharing is not required for Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants. However, applicants are welcome to use cost sharing for start-up projects in which the total budget exceeds the NEH grant limit.

Subsequent project phases

As the name implies, Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants support the initial phases of digital projects. Other NEH funding programs—including in particular the Digital Humanities Implementation Grants program—can support subsequent phases; however, the receipt of a Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant does not imply (let alone guarantee) continued support beyond the completion of the grant.

III. Eligibility

Eligibility is limited to

- U.S. nonprofit organizations or institutions with IRS tax-exempt status; and

- state and local governmental agencies and federally recognized Indian tribal organizations.

Individuals are not eligible to apply.

Degree candidates may not be project directors.

Project directors may submit only one application to this program at a time, although they may participate in more than one Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant. They may also apply for other NEH awards.

When two or more institutions or organizations collaborate on a project, one of them must serve as the lead applicant and administer the grant on behalf of the others.

NEH generally does not award grants to other federal entities or to applicants whose projects are so closely intertwined with a federal entity that the project takes on characteristics of the federal entity's own authorized activities. This does not preclude applicants from using grant funds from, or sites and materials controlled by, other federal entities in their projects.

Late, incomplete, or ineligible applications will not be reviewed.

IV. Application and Submission Information

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION

Application advice and proposal drafts

Prior to submitting a proposal, applicants are encouraged to contact program officers, who can offer advice about preparing the proposal and the review process. Program officers can also review draft proposals, which are optional. Program officers' comments on draft proposals are not part of the formal review process and have no bearing on the final outcome of the proposal, but applicants have found them helpful in strengthening their applications.

Program staff recommends that draft proposals be submitted at least six weeks before the deadline. Time constraints may prevent staff from reviewing draft proposals submitted after that date. Draft proposals may be submitted by e-mail attachment to odh@neh.gov.

Applicants are also encouraged to examine the sample narratives from previously funded projects, which are available on the program resource page.

You will prepare your application for submission via Grants.gov just as you would a paper application. Your application should consist of the following parts.

1. **Table of contents**

   List all parts of the application and corresponding page numbers.

2. **List of participants**

   On a separate page, list all project participants and collaborators and their institutional affiliations, if any. The names on this list should match the names mentioned in the staff section of the project's narrative description. This list should also include advisory board members, if any—as well as the names and institutional affiliations of any experts who have provided letters of support. The list is used to ensure that prospective reviewers have no conflict of interest with the projects that they will evaluate.

3. **Abstract and statements of innovation and humanities significance**

   Provide a one-paragraph (up to one thousand characters) abstract written for a nonspecialist audience, clearly explaining the project's principal activities and its expected results. This paragraph may also be used in the Project Information field in the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance—Short Organizational form. (Information about this form is available in the Grants.gov Instructions for Institutional Applicants document. You can find a link to that document on the program resource page.)

   After the abstract, provide the following two brief statements, each of which may contain no more than five hundred characters:

Statement of Innovation: using the description of innovation found in the Frequently Asked Questions (a link to which is available on the program resource page) as a starting point, briefly explain—in terms comprehensible to a general audience—how and why the project is innovative.

Statement of Humanities Significance: briefly explain—in terms comprehensible to a general audience—the humanities significance of the proposed project (that is, what the project will contribute to a particular discipline or field, and what it will contribute to the humanities more generally).

4. **Narrative**

The narrative should not assume specialized knowledge, and it should be free of jargon. It should clearly define technical terms so that they are comprehensible to a nonspecialist audience.

Applicants should provide an intellectual justification for the project and a work plan. For Level I Start-Up grants, the narrative section should not exceed three single-spaced pages. For Level II Start-Up grants, the narrative should not exceed six single-spaced pages. All pages should have one-inch margins, and the font size should be no smaller than eleven point. Applicants may use any citation style and format, as long as they use it consistently.

The narrative should address the long-term goals for the project as well as the activities that the Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant would support. Applicants should keep in mind the criteria (listed in Section V below) used to evaluate proposals. Applicants must state whether they are applying for a Level I or Level II grant.

Provide a detailed project description that addresses the following topics.

o **Enhancing the humanities through innovation**

Provide a clear and concise explanation—comprehensible to a general audience—of the start-up activities and the ultimate project results, noting their value to scholars, students, and general audiences in the humanities. Describe the scope of the project activities, the major issues or research questions to be addressed, and their significance to the humanities. Show how the project will meet its objectives in innovative ways.

Provide a rationale for the compatibility of your methodology with the intellectual goals of the project and the expectations of those who would make use of the grant product. NEH views the use of open-source software as a key component in the broad distribution of exemplary digital scholarship in the humanities. If either the start-up project or the long-term project is not predicated on generally accessible open-source software, explain why and also explain how NEH's dissemination goals will still be satisfied by the project.

If you are requesting complete or partial funding for the development, acquisition, preservation, or enhancement of geospatial data, products, or services, you must conduct a due diligence search at the Data.gov list of datasets to discover whether the needed geospatial-related data, products, or services already exist. If not, you must produce the proposed geospatial data, products, or services in compliance with applicable proposed guidance posted at www.fgdc.gov. For further information on this requirement, please see Article 34 of the General Terms and Conditions for Awards.

o **Environmental scan**

Provide a clear and concise summary of an environmental scan of the relevant field. The goal of an environmental scan is to take a careful look at similar work being done in your area of study. For example, if you are developing software to solve a particular humanities problem, please discuss similar software developed for other projects and explain how the proposed solution differs. If there are existing software products that could be adapted and re-used for the proposed project, please identify them and discuss the pros and cons of taking that approach. If there are existing humanities projects that are similar in nature to your project, please describe them and discuss how they relate to the proposed project. The environmental scan should make it clear that you are aware of similar work being done and should explain how your proposed project contributes to and advances the field.

o **History and duration of the project**

Provide a concise history of the project, including information about preliminary research or planning, previous related work, previous financial support, publications produced, and resources or research facilities available. Work on projects initiated during the term of a Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant is expected to continue after the period of the grant. Describe plans for that work and probable sources of support for subsequent phases of the project.

o **Work plan**

- Describe the specific tasks that will be accomplished during the grant period, identify the computer technology to be employed, and identify the staff members involved. The start-up activities described in the proposal should be completed by the end of the grant period.

- Indicate what technical resources will be required.

- Describe plans for evaluating the results of the start-up activities. This evaluation should both look back on what the Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant will have accomplished and look forward to how the long-term project goals will be achieved.

- If your project involves staging a workshop or conference, please include, as an appendix to your application, the agenda and a list of proposed participants.

   o **Staff**

   Briefly identify the project director and collaborators who would work on the project during the proposed grant period and describe their responsibilities. Project directors must devote a significant portion of their time to their projects. All persons directly involved in the conduct of the proposed project—whether or not their salaries are paid from grant funds—should be listed, their anticipated commitments of time should be indicated, and the reasons for and nature of their collaboration should be explained.

   If the project has an advisory board, provide a list of board members and a statement of its function in the biographies section of the application, which is discussed below.

   o **Final product and dissemination**

   Describe the plans to disseminate the project results through various media (printed articles or books, presentations at meetings, electronic media, or some combination of these). Explain how your white paper will detail the activities of the project and discuss its potential usefulness to the field.

   Projects developing new software are encouraged to make the software free in every sense of the term, including the use, copying, distribution, and modification of the software. Open-source software or source code should preferably be made publicly available through an online repository such as SourceForge or GitHub.

5. **Project budget**

   Using the instructions and the sample budget, complete the budget form (MS Excel format) or a format of your own that includes all the required information. (You can find links to the budget instructions, sample budget, and budget form on the program resource page.)

   All project directors will attend a planning meeting at the NEH offices in Washington, D.C. Directors should budget accordingly for a one-day meeting in the first year of the requested grant period.

   If you are claiming indirect costs, please attach a copy of your institution's current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement to the budget form. Alternatively, you can use the government-wide rate of up to 10 percent of the total direct costs, less distorting items (including but not limited to capital expenditures, participant stipends, fellowships, and the portion of each subgrant or subcontract in excess of $25,000).This

option is not available to sponsorship (umbrella) organizations. Applicants who choose this option should understand that they must maintain documentation to support overhead charges claimed as part of project costs.

Budget narrative (optional)

If needed, include a brief narrative supplement to the budget, explaining projected expenses or other items in the financial information provided on the NEH budget form. The budget narrative may be single-spaced.

Applicants are advised to retain a copy of their budget form.

6. **Biographies**

Include a biographies section that contains a brief, one-paragraph biography for each principal project participant. If the project has an advisory board, provide a statement of its function.

7. **Data management plan**

Prepare a data management plan for the project. The plan should describe how the project team will manage and disseminate data generated or collected by the project. For example, projects in this category may generate data such as software code, algorithms, digital tools, reports, articles, research notes, or websites. Include as an attachment (not to exceed two pages) a description of the project data management. For further guidance on the content of this plan, please see Data Management Plans for NEH Office of Digital Humanities Proposals and Awards. (A link to this document is available on the program resource page.)

8. **Letters of commitment and support**

Include letters of commitment from other participants and cooperating institutions. (Note that the project director does not need to provide a letter of commitment.) Include letters of support (preferably no more than two) from experts in the project's subject area, the proposed methodology, or the technical plan.

9. **Appendices**

If applicable, include workshop or meeting agendas, a bibliography or list of works cited, wireframes, screen shots, or other project schematics. Materials in this section may not exceed ten pages.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

The application must be submitted to Grants.gov. Links to the Grants.gov application package and instructions for preparing and submitting the package can be found on the program resource page.

Deadlines

Program staff recommends that draft proposals (which are optional) be submitted at least six weeks before the deadline. Time constraints may prevent staff from reviewing draft proposals submitted after that date.

Applications must be received by Grants.gov on or before September 11, 2014. Grants.gov will date- and time-stamp your application after it is fully uploaded. Late applications will not be reviewed.

V. Application Review

Evaluation of the application will take into account both the activities proposed for the start-up project and the long-term project goals.

Evaluators are asked to apply the following criteria:

1. The intellectual significance of the project for the humanities, including its potential to enhance research, teaching, and learning in the humanities.

2. The likelihood that the project will stimulate or facilitate new research of value to scholars and general audiences in the humanities, or use new digital technologies to communicate humanities scholarship to broad audiences.

3. The quality of innovation in terms of the idea, approach, method, or digital technology, and the appropriateness of the technology employed in the project.

4. The quality of the conception, definition, organization, and description of the project and the applicant's clarity of expression.

5. The feasibility of the plan of work, including whether the start-up activities will significantly contribute to the project's long-term goals.

6. The qualifications, expertise, and levels of commitment of the project director and key project staff or contributors.

NEH expects grantees to provide broad access to all grant products, insofar as the conditions of the materials and intellectual property rights allow. For the Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants program, such products may include software code, algorithms, digital tools, reports, articles,

and websites. For projects that lead to the development of such products, all other considerations being equal, NEH gives preference to those that provide free access to the public.

Review and selection process

Knowledgeable persons outside NEH will read each application and advise the agency about its merits. NEH staff comments on matters of fact or on significant issues that otherwise would be missing from these reviews, then makes recommendations to the National Council on the Humanities. The National Council meets at various times during the year to advise the NEH Chairman on grants. The Chairman takes into account the advice provided by the review process and, by law, makes all funding decisions. More details about NEH's review process are available here.

VI. Award Administration Information

System for Award Management Entity records

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) requires federal agencies to make information about the expenditure of tax funds available to the public. To facilitate this, an applicant organization must maintain current information in its Entity record in the System for Award Management (SAM), which now administers the former Central Contractor Registry (CCR). You must therefore review and update the information in your Entity record at least annually after the initial registration, and more frequently if required by changes in your information or another award term. In order for you to apply for an award via Grants.gov, receive an award, or receive payment on an award, the information in your Entity record must be current. You can update your organization's Entity record here. You may need a new SAM User Account to register or update your Entity record.

Award notices

Applicants will be notified by e-mail in March 2015. Institutional grants administrators and project directors of successful applications will receive award documents by e-mail in April 2015. Applicants may obtain the evaluations of their applications by sending an e-mail message to odh@neh.gov.

Administrative requirements

Before submitting an application, applicants should review their responsibilities as an award recipient.

Award conditions

The requirements for awards are contained in the General Terms and Conditions for Awards, the Addendum to it, any specific terms and conditions contained in the award documents, and the applicable OMB circulars governing federal grants management.

Reporting requirements

A schedule of report due dates will be included with the award documents.

Reports must be submitted electronically via eGMS, NEH's online grant management system.

A final performance report will be required and interim reports may be required, depending on the length of the grant period. Further details can be found in Performance Reporting Requirements.

A final Federal Financial Report (SF-425, PDF) will be due within ninety days after the end of the award period. For further details, please see the Financial Reporting Requirements.

A white paper will be required and will be due within ninety days after the end of the grant period. This white paper should document the project, including lessons learned, so that others can benefit. This white paper will be posted on the NEH website.

VII. Points of Contact

If you have questions about the program, contact the ODH staff at odh@neh.gov. Applicants wishing to speak to a staff member by telephone should provide in an e-mail message a telephone number and a preferred time to call.

If you need help using Grants.gov, refer to

Grants.gov: www.grants.gov
Grants.gov help desk: support@grants.gov
Grants.gov customer support tutorials and manuals:
http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-resources.html
Grants.gov support line: 1-800-518-GRANTS (4726)
Grants.gov troubleshooting tips

VIII. Other Information

Privacy policy

Information in these guidelines is solicited under the authority of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965, as amended, 20 U.S.C. 956. The principal purpose for which the information will be used is to process the grant application. The information may also be used for statistical research, analysis of trends, and Congressional oversight. Failure to provide the information may result in the delay or rejection of the application.

Application completion time

The Office of Management and Budget requires federal agencies to supply information on the time needed to complete forms and also to invite comments on the paperwork burden. NEH estimates that the average time to complete this application is fifteen hours per response. This estimate includes time for reviewing instructions, researching, gathering, and maintaining the information needed, and completing and reviewing the application.

Please send any comments regarding the estimated completion time or any other aspect of this application, including suggestions for reducing the completion time, to the Chief Guidelines Officer, at guidelines@neh.gov; the Office of Publications, National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, D.C. 20506; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (3136-0134), Washington, D.C. 20503. According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

☐ **Verify and if necessary update your institution's Entity record, or create an Entity record for your institution, at the System for Award Management (SAM).** Complete at least four weeks before the deadline.

☐ **Verify your institution's registration or register your institution with Grants.gov.** Complete at least two weeks before deadline.

☐ **Download the application package from Grants.gov.** The program resource page on NEH's website has a direct link to the package. Alternatively, you can search Grants.gov for this program. The program resource page also has a direct link to the instructions for completing the package.

☐ **Complete the following forms contained in the Grants.gov application package.**

1. Application for Federal Domestic Assistance - Short Organizational

2. Supplementary Cover Sheet for NEH Grant Programs

3. Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form

4. Attachments Form—Using this form, attach the parts of your application as described in the guidelines:

   ATTACHMENT 1: Table of contents (name the file "contents.pdf")

   ATTACHMENT 2: List of project participants (name the file "participantslist.pdf")

   ATTACHMENT 3: Abstract (name the file "abstract.pdf")

   ATTACHMENT 4: Narrative (name the file "narrative.pdf")

   ATTACHMENT 5: Budget and—if you are claiming indirect costs—a copy of your institution's current federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (name the file "budget.pdf")

   ATTACHMENT 6: Biographies (name the file "biographies.pdf")

   ATTACHMENT 7: Data management plan (name the file "data.pdf")

ATTACHMENT 8: Letters of commitment and support (name the file "letters.pdf")

ATTACHMENT 9: Appendices (name the file "appendices.pdf")

Your attachments must be in Portable Document Format (.pdf). We cannot accept attachments in their original word processing or spreadsheet formats. If you don't already have software to convert your files into PDFs, many low-cost and free software packages will do so. You can learn more about converting documents into PDFs here.

Upload your application to Grants.gov. NEH **strongly** suggests that you submit your application no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the day of the deadline. Doing so will leave you time to contact the Grants.gov help desk for support, should you encounter a technical problem of some kind. The Grants.gov help desk is now available seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day (except on federal holidays), at 1-800-518-4726. You can also send an e-mail message to support@grants.gov.